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SUBJECT: GREECE/TIP: NEW SHELTERS OPENED, BUT FEW VICTIMS  
BEING PROTECTED

REF: 2004 ATHENS 2199

1. SUMMARY: The GoG continues to make progress on trafficking in persons (TIP) infrastructure, but has so far protected few victims. Probable causes are inadequate NGO involvement until now in the screening process and limited understanding on the part of the police and TIP victims of the protections available under Greece's legislation. Two NGO shelters for victims of trafficking in persons and domestic violence opened in Athens in October with close GoG cooperation. Meanwhile GoG shelters that opened in early 2005 have "temporarily" closed after sitting empty for months. In a major October bust that freed 31 victims of forced labor trafficking, none were reported to have sought shelter. The GoG has committed to increase GoG-NGO cooperation, and we will continue to push for greater victim protection. Comprehensive TIP developments from Athens and Thessaloniki will be reported septels. END SUMMARY.

#### Care NGO Opens TIP Shelter in Athens

2. On October 13, the new international NGO "Care/DESO: The International Society for Family Support" inaugurated its hilltop shelter for victims of domestic violence and trafficking in the Athens suburb of Melissia. Care is headed by the energetic and well-connected activist Irini Dorkofiki, whose previous church-affiliated NGO and shelter, "KESO," closed in Spring 2005. Dorkofiki plans to offer full victim support services, violence prevention for men who commit domestic violence, and pro-adoption shelter for unmarried mothers at the 22-bed Melissia site, as well as shelter for 16 additional victims at sites in Galatsi and Marathona. Care's building was provided by the Ministry of Health. The popular Health Minister Nikitas Kaklamanis declared at the opening, "Our cultural development is not measured by our art, poetry, or music, but by how we treat our minorities and less fortunate."

#### Solidarity NGO Opens Shelter

3. On October 8, the Church of Greece's NGO, "Solidarity" opened the doors of its 50-bed shelter for abused women and children and victims of trafficking in the Kypseli suburb of Athens. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Hellenic Aid provided one million euros of its 3.1 million euro anti-TIP budget for 2004 to Solidarity, in large part for the construction of the shelter, and there is probably no NGO closer to the GoG. At the shelter's ribbon-cutting, Deputy Foreign Minister Evripidis Stylianidis hailed the shelter as a way to "provide relief to the victims of modern-day slavery." Archbishop of Athens and All Greece Christodoulos called the six-story structure a "marvelous and healthy collaboration between the Church and State." The shelter, which had its groundbreaking June 2004, (reftel) is staffed to provide psycho-social support and legal advice to victims of trafficking.

#### Meanwhile, GoG and NGO Shelters Closed or Underfunded

4. The Ministry of Health's Center for Urgent Social Aid (EKAKV) opened TIP shelters in both Thessaloniki and Athens in 2005, then "temporarily" closed them after very few victims were sheltered and costs ran high. Present at the opening of the Care shelter was Andreas Milios, Director of EKAKV, which operated the GoG's Athens shelter until its closure. Milios commented to poloff that compared to the huge budget of his shelters, including for full-time staff and 24-hour security, the Care shelter will be more sustainable. Notably, the Care and Solidarity shelters are likely to regularly shelter domestic violence victims, who are not in short supply in Greece. Meanwhile, the most active TIP shelter in Athens, run by Doctors of the World (MdM), was closed in August after allocated GoG funding was delayed and there was a change in the NGO's administration. And the psychiatrist/NGO activist who runs the only shelter in Thessaloniki, Stavros Boufidis, reported Oct 19 that he is 40,000 euros out-of-pocket after delays in allocated funding from MFA's Hellenic Aid.

#### Major Labor Trafficking Bust

15. In one of Greece's first major labor trafficking busts, police from the anti-trafficking division arrested 17 Romanian traffickers and freed 31 Romanian TIP victims on October 1. The victims had been lured to Greece under the false promise of 35 euros per day employment in return for a 500 fee to cover travel expenses. Upon arrival in Greece, the migrants were "charged" another 800 euros, resulting in the confiscation of their daily wages. According to the police, the victims worked as day laborers in agriculture and construction, and begged at traffic lights when day labor was scarce, always supervised by their traffickers. In the evenings, they were locked in two basement apartments guarded by the traffickers, some of whom were married couples. The victims were allegedly tortured, threatened with a pistol, and given minimal sustenance. The traffickers were reportedly charged, but neither the head of the anti-trafficking division nor the director of IOM had any details about the status of the victims.

16. COMMENT: Greece's challenge remains to comprehensively and systematically implement its prevention, protection, and prosecution strategies, translating its good police work into more victim protection. With two church-affiliated organizations, Care and Solidarity, NGOs with excellent GoG relations and large shelters are in place to do just that. Care's Dorkofiki is a tireless advocate for victims and, despite her sometimes unorthodox methods, she has a history of receiving many victim referrals from the police. Police, IOM, and the GoG, however, maintain that close to 100 percent of TIP victims they identify ask to be repatriated immediately, so the state has been unable to offer them shelter or protection. If police and victims better understood the benefits available to TIP victims, they might choose to receive it. We will continue to follow up on TIP cases and trials, and urge the GoG to develop a mechanism that better screens, identifies and truly protects all of its victims. END COMMENT.  
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